

Message Text

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10

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11

EUR-12 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAB-01 SSM-03 /086 W

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R 051600Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L 2052

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SY

SUBJECT: DETENTION OF PALESTINIANS FOLLOWING LAND
DAY DEMONSTRATIONS

REF: DAMASCUS 1957

1. REFTEL REPORTED DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN SYRIA ON MARCH 30 LAND DAY. USUALLY RELIABLE SYRIAN SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 5 THAT GROUP OF PALESTINIAN LAND DAY DEMONSTRATORS HAD GATHERED AT EGYPTIAN EMBASSY AND HAD ROUGHED UP AT LEAST ONE SYRIAN SECURITY GUARD WHO TRIED TO RESTRAIN THEM. HE SAID THAT PRO-IRAQI PALESTINIANS AS WELL AS SYMPATHIZERS OF PFLP HAD PARTICIPATED IN ORGANIZING THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND THIS PROBABLY ACCOUNTED FOR INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE. SUBSEQUENTLY, SARG SECURITY FORCES BEGAN MASSIVE SWEEP OF YARMUK CAMP AND SO FAR HAVE DETAINED HUNDREDS OF PALESTINIANS SUSPECTED OF IRAQI OR PFLP AFFILIATIONS. MANY ARE IN MEZZE PRISON, HE STATED, AND ADDED THAT REGIME TRYING TO DOWNPLAY REPORTS OF NUMBER OF DETAINEES TO PREVENT FURTHER
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INCITEMENT OF LOCAL PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY. HE NOTED

THAT SYRIANS WITH RELATIVES IN MEZZE HAD BEEN TEMPORARILY
REFUSED PERMISSION TO ENTER PRISON ON VISITS WHICH
UP UNTIL FEW DAYS AGO HAD BEEN CONSIDERED ROUTINE,
AND ASCRIBED RESTRICTION TO PRESENCE OF MANY PALESTINIAN
PRISONERS.

2. COMMENT: REPORTS OF POPULAR RESISTANCE ON WEST BANK
AND WITHIN ISRAEL, ADDED TO TENSIONS GENERATED BY LEBANESE
CRISIS, HAVE FOUND ECHO IN PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY IN SYRIA.

ACCORDING TO ABOVE REPORT, SYRIAN SECURITY SERVICES ARE
PREDICTABLY ACTING QUICKLY AND FIRMLY TO PREVENT FURTHER
SPREAD OF ACTIVIST SENTIMENT AMONG LOCAL PALESTINIANS.
MURPHY

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